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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BASRAH 000146

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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/NEA, DS/IP/ITA, DS/ICI/PII

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TAGS: PGOV ASEC IZ

SUBJECT: MURDER INVESTIGATION OF BASRAH REO LOCAL EMPLOYEE

REF: U.S. EMBASSY BAHGDAD SPOT REPORT: 08/26/06

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CLASSIFIED BY: Bryan T. Bachmann, RSO, REO Basrah, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: On August 26, 2006, a local Triple Canopy contract employee who worked as a translator at Basrah's Regional Embassy Office (REO) was murdered and her sister seriously injured as they returned home from work. RSO and ARSO interviewed the employee's two brothers, one of whom works as a police officer with the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and the other is a KBR contractor. On September 9, 2006, RSO and ARSO met with Raof Habib Hussian and Nassr Habib Hussian, the brothers of Wassan and Intisar Hussian. They provided an account of the crime, the subsequent investigation, and the corruption within the Basrah Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU). Interview results indicate the possibility of police involvement in the deadly attack and reinforce the dangerous work environment for the REO's local employees. End Summary.

ATTACK LEFT ONE DEAD, ONE SERIOUSLY INJURED

¶12. (SBU) On September 9, Raof Hussian, a KBR contractor and brother of the victims, recounted to the RSO his surviving sister's story of the attack. According to his sister Intisar, she and her sister Wassan departed the Basrah Palace Compound from the American gate at approximately 1230 local time. As was their custom, Wassan and Intisar avoided hiring the first taxi that approached and continued to walk along the street until another taxi offered a fare. The taxi was described as an old, yellow Mazda 4-door sedan. The taxi driver (described as having a long face with pitted scar markings, green eyes, long thick curly hair combed to the side, and a clean shaven face) offered a lower than normal fare which was agreed upon by both sisters. Upon entering the taxi, the driver rolled down all four windows of the sedan. Wassan and Intisar complained about the windows being rolled down because of the wind, but were compelled by the driver to leave them down.

¶13. (SBU) While driving through the Al Ashar area, the sisters both noticed the taxi driver constantly looking at his rearview mirror. Wassan and Intisar looked behind them and saw a motorcycle following them. Upon informing the taxi driver of their suspicions, Wassan noticed an Iraqi Police Checkpoint nearby and instructed the taxi driver to pull over at the checkpoint to drop them off. However, the taxi driver deviated

from his original route and went on to another side road before arriving at the Iraqi Police Checkpoint.

¶4. (SBU) As the taxi neared the Al Qanina intersection in the Al Jubila area, the taxi driver stated he was having motor vehicle problems and began to pull over to the right shoulder of the road. The taxi driver exited the vehicle and lifted up the hood to fix the problem. At this point, an olive color, newer model, Chinese production motorcycle with two occupants pulled along side the taxi's left rear passenger door. The motorcycle driver was unidentifiable, but the passenger was described as having a bald spot on top of his head, with a grey and black semi-circle of hair on the sides, and wearing a full beard. Intisar saw the motorcycle passenger pull a pistol from his hip and point it directly at Wassan who was sitting in the left rear seat. Intisar threw her arms around Wassan to shield her sister. The motorcycle passenger fired multiple shots, wounding Intisar in the upper left arm while mortally striking Wassan in the upper left chest, lower left hand, and lower right abdomen. The motorcycle passenger then got off the motorcycle to see if the passengers were dead. No further shots were fired and both motorcycle occupants fled the crime scene.

¶5. (SBU) Wassan and Intisar both survived the initial attack and screamed for the taxi driver to take them to a hospital. The taxi driver refused, stating that his vehicle was inoperable. At this point, day laborers and other pedestrians began to surround the crime scene. A passing car pulled over and offered assistance and took both sisters to the Al Rahma Hospital. Upon arriving at the Al Rahma Hospital the physician refused to provide medical attention, stating he was "not on duty" and not available to provide treatment. Wassan and Intisar were then immediately transported to the "Training Hospital" but Wassan died en route. Intisar was shot once in left upper arm and the bullet was removed. She is currently at home resting, but has developed an infection around the wound.

A BROTHER'S INVESTIGATION

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¶6. (C) Nassr Habib Hussyn Al Musawi is the brother of Wassan and Intisar and an Iraqi police officer in the Car Hijacking Unit. He began conducting a personal investigation into his sister's death soon after the attack. Nassr provided a sketch artist for Intisar to describe the taxi driver and motorcycle attackers. The sketches were then distributed to Nassr's personal friends to assist with finding those responsible. Nassr visited the Al Qanina crime scene and talked with day laborers who witnessed the attack. The day laborers claimed that after the attack, and after the sisters were transported to the hospital, the taxi cab driver lowered his car hood and drove away from the crime scene.

¶7. (C) During Nassr's investigation, information was provided that a passerby witnessed the attack and followed the motorcycle as it fled away. According to the witness, the motorcycle was followed to Makateb Street in Al Jumhuriyah. On Makateb Street the motorcycle darted into a small ally too narrow for a car to follow. Nassr and personal friends continue to search for the motorcycle.

THE POLICE INVESTIGATION

¶8. (C) Nassr said that on September 6, 2006, Abu Abdullah, a municipal civil employee, was murdered in the Ar Rabbat neighborhood by two individuals on a motorcycle. The Ar Rabbat police arrested two suspects. The suspects were in possession of a Glock pistol and AK-47 rifle. Nassr learned from other officers present at the questioning that the two suspects were believed have been the same individuals who perpetrated the attack on his sisters.

¶9. (C) Nassr said that Lt. Col Radhi and Lt. Col Hassen Khanjer brought the criminals before Brigadier General Kadhim, the police chief of Al-Ashar police center. He added that one of the suspects was identified as Abu Muhamad AKA Muhssen Al-Shieei.

Nassr said that Al-Shieei is the brother of a police major named Ali Muhssen Al-Shieei. According to Nassr, the police major reportedly works in the logistics division of the police.

¶10. (C) Nassr stated that after having been brought in to see BG Khadim, the two suspects were released from police custody into the custody of Major Al-Shieei at 0100 on the morning of September 7, from BG Kadhim's office. The two suspects were not charged, the crime scene was not processed, and the weapons were not checked.

¶11. (C) Nassr Hussyin's investigation yielded the following results: He has acquired a photograph of the motorcycle driver in the murder of the municipal employee, identified as POLICE INVOLVEMENT - POLICE CORRUPTION

¶12. (C) Nassr Hussyin described that the Criminal Intelligence Unit, the unit he feels directly responsible for the attack, as a platoon that was officially disbanded but, unofficially, still drives police cars, has credentials, weapons, radios, and even police resources. Nassr stated that this platoon was responsible for the majority of killings, attacks, and crime attributed to the Iraqi police in Basrah. (Note. This has been echoed by other contacts. End note.) He added that every police officer had to pay 10,000 Iraqi Dinar per month to support this unit since its members are no longer on an official payroll. Nassr cited the CIU's involvement in a mortar attacks, saying that he once heard a transmission on the police radio telling police officers to leave the area around the Shatt al Arab hotel directly before an attack took place. Nassr emphasized that this unit was for hire by one of three political groups, Fadillah, Sadr, and Shabban 15, whenever a murder or attack needed to be completed. (Note: Nassr Hussyin, as a police officer, expressed grave concern that British funds for police training were getting into the hands of this rogue unit. He also shared his frustration that the police units were uncooperative and self serving. He asserted that his own unit, the car hijacking unit, had recovered so many stolen autos that the unit was ordered disbanded by the Ministry of Interior. End note.)

¶13. (C) COMMENT. Wissam and Intisar's brothers expressed their hope that the United States could help find justice for their sister's killer. The continued threat and intimidation of locally employed staff has made the work environment increasingly difficult. The British military has also lost staff to murder and assassination and is trying to find ways to redress the issueKalef, who lives behind Sayed Ali Al-Ablah Mosque as an illegal squatter. Kalef is also reportedly an

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ex-convict of Abu Ghraib prison. Nassr is actively looking for the taxi driver and car and believes he can find them within a week. (Note. Nassr expressed disappointment when he found out that the REO does not have camera coverage or recording at the REO Front Gate. End note.)

. Currently, the REO has only one local employed staff and she is under threat for working with the REO. The fear of being associated with the REO and put at risk for assassination is high. The REO's RSO office will follow up on the status of the murder investigation with the Basrah Chief of Police. REO Basrah will stress our grave concerns regarding this particular police investigation and the security and safety of all Basrah Palace compound employees.

GROSS